At Elementary level, Computer Aided Learning, a component of the Scheme 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)' is being implemented in an effort to improve the quality of education both in rural and urban areas.

At Secondary level, a Scheme called 'information and Communication Technology (ICT) @ School' is being implemented by this Ministry that aims to bridge the digital divide. It provides a level playing field to school students, whether in rural areas or in the metropolitan cities. This Scheme is not a stand-alone scheme but actively solicits the partnership of States, Union Territories & other organisation in a mutual endeavour to bridge the heterogeneous proliferation of ICT across different socio-economic and geographic segments in the country. In addition, the Ministry has already launched a One Stop Education Website portal called Sakshat to cater to all types of educational requirements of learners in both rural and urban areas. Programmes beamed through Edusat Satellite and other distance learning courses run by IGNOU cater to the IT related needs of rural children and students also. In the 11th Plan Working Group Reports, steps are being identified to mount research efforts to make available very low cost computing and internet access devices, connectivity for rural areas, digital literacy and virtual laboratories etc. The financial projections for the 11th Five Year Plan are still under process.

Understanding the concepts by students

2750. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent survey that shows that the students appear to be learning mechanically rather than by truly understanding the concepts; and

(b) whether Government would consider restructuring the whole education system so that students improve their skills independently developing this inherent intellectual aptitude?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Yes, Sir. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is aware of a survey on the learning and performance of students in schools in India, published recently in a magazine.

(b) At Secondary Education level, CBSE. Council for the India School Certification Examination (CISCE), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), recognizing diversity in intellectual aptitude of the students have provided flexibility in choice of subjects so as to integrate learning with abilities and talents. Introduction of a skill-based subject as a compulsory component of the curriculum is facilitating the students in proving their skills and developing their inherent intellectual aptitude.

At the Higher Education level, University Grants Commission (UGC) provides students with an opportunity to reflect the critical social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. It contributes to nation?! development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills.

Disproportionate syllabus of students

2751. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the syllabus prescribed in schools is disproportionate to the students' age and class;

(b) whether Government would consider reviewing the existing education system in the country to make students more knowledgeable with freedom to choose subjects as is the case in foreign countries;

(c) if so, the steps/schemes proposed to be taken; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not considering the same particularly when Indian students fare poorly in comparison to international students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) The issue of perception of mismatch between curricuiar content and the student's age and class has been addressed while formulating the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005. Some key features of NCF, 2005 are:

  (i) appropriateness of topics and themes for the relevant stages of children's development from a phychological point of view;

  (ii) connecting knowledge to life outside the school;

  (iii) Ensuring that learning shifts away from rote'methods;